

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): An image processing apparatus, comprising:

a communication unit configured to exchange data with an external device;

an attribute determination unit that determines an image attribute of a first image signal on a pixel by pixel basis to generate ~~an attribute signal indicating the image attribute a~~ dot identification signal and a black-character identification signal;

an embedding unit that embeds the black-character identification signal ~~attribute~~ signal in the first image signal in a predetermined format to obtain a second image signal; ~~and~~

a storage unit that stores ~~the attribute signal and one of the first image signal and the~~ second image signal including the dot identification signal and the black-character identification signal, wherein

the second image signal is transmitted to the external device through the communication unit;

an extractor that extracts the black-character identification signal from the second image signal; and

an image processor that performs predetermined image processing on the second image signal stored, based on the dot identification signal and black-character identification signal.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, further comprising:

a first compressor that irreversibly compresses one of the first image signal and the second image signal to store the image signal compressed in the storage unit;

a second compressor that reversibly compresses the attribute signal to store the attribute signal compressed in the storage unit;

a first decompressor that decompresses the second image signal compressed; and

a second decompressor that decompresses the attribute signal compressed, wherein the extractor extracts the attribute signal from the second image signal decompressed, and

the image processor performs predetermined image processing on the second image signal decompressed, based on the attribute signal decompressed.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, further comprising:

a compressor that irreversibly compresses one of the first image signal and the second image signal to store the image signal compressed in the storage unit; and

a decompressor that decompresses the second image signal compressed, wherein the extractor extracts the attribute signal from the second image signal decompressed.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the predetermined image processing includes undercolor removal-black generation.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein the predetermined image processing includes at least one of color correction, undercolor removal-black generation, γ correction, pseudo-half-tone processing, and filtering.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim [[2]] 1, wherein

the second image signal is edited in the external device,
the communication unit receives the second image signal edited from the external device,
the storage unit stores the second image signal edited,
the extractor extracts the attribute signal from the second image signal edited, and
the image processor performs predetermined image processing on the second image signal edited, based on the attribute signal extracted.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a controller that controls whether to store the attribute signal in the storage unit, depending on an image processing mode.

Claim 10 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a controller that controls whether to embed the attribute signal in the image signal in the embedding unit, depending on an image processing mode.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein

the storage unit stores the first image signal and the attribute signal,

the embedding unit embeds the attribute signal in the first image signal stored in the storage unit in a predetermined format to obtain a third image signal, and

the communication unit transmits the third image signal to the external device in which the dot identification signal is deleted and only the black-character identification signal is transmitted.

Claim 12 (Original): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a resolution converter that converts a resolution of the attribute signal to a lower resolution.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The image processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein ~~the attribute signal includes a~~ black-character identification signal indicating a black character area.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): An image processing method, comprising:
determining an image attribute of a first image signal on a pixel by pixel basis to generate an attribute signal indicating the image attribute;
embedding the attribute signal in the first image signal in a predetermined format to obtain a second image signal;
storing the attribute signal and one of the first image signal and the second image signal; ~~and~~
transmitting the second image signal to an external device;
extracting the attribute signal from the second image signal;
performing predetermined image processing on one of the first image signal and the second image signal that are stored in the storage unit, based on at least one of the attribute

signal stored and the attribute signal extracted, to generate a dot identification signal and a black-character identification signal;

embedding the black-character identification signal in the first image signal in a predetermined format to obtain a third image signal;

including in the third image signal the black-character identification signal and the dot identification signal;

extracting at least one of the black-character identification signal and the dot identification signal from the third image signal, and

performing predetermined image processing on the third image signal stored, based on the black-character identification signal stored and the dot identification signal.

Claim 15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Original): The image processing method according to claim 14, further comprising converting a resolution of the attribute signal to a lower resolution.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The image processing method according to claim 14, wherein the ~~attribute signal includes~~ a black-character identification signal indicating a black character area.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): A computer readable medium encoded with a computer program including computer executable instructions stored on a computer readable medium, wherein the instructions, when executed by the computer, cause the computer to perform:

determining an image attribute of a first image signal on a pixel by pixel basis to generate an attribute signal indicating the image attribute;

embedding the attribute signal in the first image signal in a predetermined format to obtain a second image signal;

storing the attribute signal and one of the first image signal and the second image signal; and

transmitting the second image signal to an external device;

extracting the attribute signal from the second image signal;

performing predetermined image processing on one of the first image signal and the second image signal that are stored in the storage unit, based on at least one of the attribute signal stored and the attribute signal extracted, to generate a dot identification signal and a black-character identification signal;

embedding the black-character identification signal in the first image signal in a predetermined format to obtain a third image signal;

including in the third image signal the black-character identification signal and the dot identification signal;

extracting at least one of the black-character identification signal and the dot identification signal from the third image signal, and

performing predetermined image processing on the third image signal stored, based on the black-character identification signal stored and the dot identification signal.

Claim 19 (Canceled).

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The computer ~~program~~ readable medium according to claim 18, wherein the instructions further cause the computer to perform converting a resolution of the attribute signal to a lower resolution.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): The computer ~~program~~ readable medium according to claim 18, wherein the ~~attribute signal includes a black-character identification signal~~ indicating a black character area.

Claim 22 (New): The image processing method according to claim 14, further comprising:

deleting the dot identification signal before transmitting the third image signal to an external device.

Claim 23 (New): The computer readable medium according to claim 18, further comprising:

deleting the dot identification signal before transmitting the third image signal to an external device.